Geneva September 4th 1798

Sir

In the month of September or October last, I do not exactly recollect which, I remember seeing at your house the skin of a very large animal which, was sent to you from the northern part of America; you told me, I think, Mons' de Buffon had seen this skin but that the beast was unknown to him & that you supposed it peculiar to America: Mr de Lamanone, who is engaged in perfecting his cabinet already largely filled with rare & curious animals, tells me he had much conversation with Lieut Gen.l Hamilton, who has lately been here, about the quadrupeds of america that Gen.l H. told him, whilst he was in Canada an indian trader presented him with the skin of an animal which was unknown to himself & the rest of the officers - that this animal must have been uncommonly large from the size of its skin which was remarkably thick, and of a close texture so much so, that the wet could not pass through it - that encamping on the snow this skin was always his bed - that his brother officers & neighbours were never able to speed any thing which was proof against the penetrating snow, while he, lay'd in his skin, was always dry. I am much disposed to believe the animal he adverts to is of the same species with that of which I saw the skin at your house - & I shall be obliged to you if, when perfectly at leisure, you will inform me in what part of America this animal was taken

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what name the Europeans & natives of the country

give it. and if I am right in supposing that it was un-
known to Mons^r de Buffon? from the imperfect
recollection I have of what I saw at your Hôtel. I
have given Mr de Saussure an inaccurate account
which makes him desirous of having a particular
one. I ask many pardons, my dear Sir, for the trouble
I am giving you! nothing could authorize my doing
it but the persuasion I have of your goodness
that the information I request of you will
enable me, in some measure, to requite the great attentions
I have received from Mons^r de S. I shall also
esteem it very friendly of you if you will inform
me whether it is supposed that the race of animals
of which very large & huge bones have been found on
the Ohio, are extinct; or whether, retiring from the
approaches of man, they have fled into the savage &
unknown Countries! We have nothing new in this
country. every thing is quiet & peaceable. & the people are
happy which I hope you always will be. I am, dear Sir, with
the sincerest sentiments of regard & esteem

Your much obliged friend & servt

Rutledge

Be pleased to direct to me Fort Severne at Geneva!